

**STATE OF ILLINOIS**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Meeting of the Commission

September 16, 2009

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
Room 5-300  
100 West Randolph Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
and  
Lincoln Land Training Center  
130 W. Mason Street, Room 104  
Springfield, Illinois

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Commissioners

*In Chicago*

Acting Chairman Sakhawat Hussain, M.D.

David Chang

Robert S. Enriquez

Marylee V. Freeman

Spencer Leak, Sr.

Munir Muhammad

Rozanne Ronen

Yonnie Stroger

Diane Viverito

*In Springfield*

Marti Baricevic

*Absent*

Gregory Simoncini

Staff

Reva Bauch

LaNade Bridges

N. Keith Chambers

Dr. Ewa I. Ewa

Michael J. Evans

Donyelle L. Gray

Bricia Herrera

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Harriet Parker  
Meghan J. Paulas  
Christine Welninski  
Lesley Smith, Coles Fellow  
Brent Movitz, Coles Fellow

I. Call to Order

On September 16, 2009 at 10:09 a.m., Acting Chairman Sakhawat Hussain called to order a meeting of the Illinois Human Rights Commission. Chairman Hussain announced that the meeting would be audio recorded and that recording equipment was running.

Pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1 et seq., it was determined that:

- 1) A quorum of the public body was present at the meeting without the presence of Commissioner Simoncini. Prior to the meeting, Commissioner Simoncini gave notice (and good cause as defined by the Illinois Open Meetings Act) to the General Counsel and Secretary of the Public Body, Harriet Parker, that he would be unable to be present for the September 16, 2009 meeting.

II. Consideration of Minutes

July 22, 2009

The minutes of the meeting of July 22, 2009 were approved, as amended by a clarification from Commissioner Viverito, that the goal of the Commission is to produce the Annual Report in a cost-effective and concise manner. Motion made by Commissioner Freeman, with a second by Commissioner Muhammad to approve the minutes, as amended. Motion carried 10-0.

III. Staff Reports

A. N. Keith Chambers, Executive Director

C.O.S. Jerry Stermer

Executive Director Chambers reported he and Chairman Hussain were scheduled to meet on September 17, 2009, with the Governor's Chief of Staff Jerry Stermer to discuss issues of importance to the Commission.

Torture Commission and Human Rights Commission Appointments

The Torture Commission bill was signed into law without input from the Human Rights Commission. The Governor has 90 days, until November 4, 2009, to appoint members of the Torture Commission.

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Israel Salazar, Director of Boards and Commissions contacted Executive Director Chambers regarding Human Rights Commission action taken relative to the Torture Commission. Shortly thereafter, on September 15, 2009, Executive Director Chambers, General Counsel, Harriet Parker, and Mr. Salazar participated in a teleconference. During the teleconference Mr. Chambers explained that without appropriations to administer the new Commission the Human Rights Commission lacked the budgetary and personnel resources required to administer the new Torture Commission. Moreover, it is unrealistic to expect the Human Rights Commission to provide administrative support for the new Commission, including office space, absent proper funding.

Mr. Chambers questioned whether the HRC had authority to use funding appropriated exclusively for the HRC to administer the Torture Commission. Mr. Salazar shared that a report to the Governor on the Torture Commission is due on or before January 1, 2010. Mr. Salazar stated that information regarding the process for applying for a position as a Commissioner on the Torture Commission will soon be posted on the State of Illinois website. Mr. Salazar has agreed to continue to be the HRC's point person regarding the Torture Commission. Mr. Salazar advised us to expect an announcement naming the appointments and reappointments of HRC Commissioners and the new HRC Chairman by at the end of September 2009 or the beginning of October 2009.

Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) Unionized

Executive Director Chambers reported that all Human Rights Commission ALJs, except for the Chief ALJ Michael Evans, are now covered under the collective bargaining agreement with AFCSME, pursuant to a Labor Board ruling of August 17, 2009.

B. Dr. Ewa Ewa, Chief Fiscal Officer (CFO)

CFO Ewa Ewa reported that the Commission received one finding pursuant to the State's recently completed property inventory audit. The inventory auditors entered a finding that the HRC lacked an official policy for tracking purchases. In response to this audit finding, CFO Ewa has completed the preliminary drafting of a HRC protocol (*Human Rights Commission Inventory Policies and Procedures*) for tracking purchases over \$100.00. CFO Ewa will present the completed policy document at the October 2009 En Banc Meeting for consideration. Once approved by the Commission the policy will be implemented.

The Commission has purchased a new copier/scanner. Licenses for the ALJs to use the scanner function will be purchased.

C. Michael J. Evans, Chief Administrative Law Judge

Chief ALJ Evans stated that in July and August of 2009, the number of new cases was nearly equal to the number of cases closed. Chief Evans stated that the summer months are routinely slower than other months. Fewer complaints are being filed with the HRC because of the Department of Human Rights'

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practice of obtaining extensions of time, usually for 300 to 365 days to complete its investigations. The HRC will eventually receive many of these cases.

**D. Harriet Parker, General Counsel**

The General Counsel introduced the Commission's Fall 2009 Coles Fellows, Lesley Smith and Brent Movitz. The Commission also has a Fall 2009, unpaid High School student intern, Kelsey Kaus, who was unable to attend the *En banc* Meeting.

The Commissioners were informed that Assistant General Counsel Meghan Paulas has resigned her position with the Commission, effective September 22, 2009. The Commissioners expressed their appreciation for her service to the HRC.

The General Counsel reported that she has contacted the Governor's Office regarding the approval of the epar for Attorney Evelio Mora, whom the Commission hopes to hire to fill Meghan Paulas' position as soon as possible.

Ms. Parker e-mailed Jessica Kimbrough, the HRC General Counsel's liaison in the Governor's Office, regarding the urgency of approving Evelio Mora for hire. The General Counsel copied the Governor's General Counsel, Ted Chung on the e-mail. The General Counsel will follow up with a telephone call to Ms. Kimbrough. Lastly, the General Counsel reported the HRC is receiving 28-45 Requests for Review per month.

**IV. Old Business**

**A. FY2008-2009 Annual Report**

Executive Director Chambers presented a draft of the Annual Report to the Commissioners. Executive Director Chambers reported that State of Illinois Central Management Services (CMS) can do layout and design work for the Annual Report. Commissioner Viverito requested that the other Commissioners submit their comments regarding changes to the current draft by September 30, 2009. Commissioner Ronen stated that the Annual Report should include the flow chart of Commission procedure that is currently in the Commission Coles Fellowship brochure, that it should be in a reader-friendly format, and that acronyms should not be used in the Report. Commissioner Ronen noted some of the numbers regarding the Commission caseload do not appear to accurately reflect the level of work performed by the Commission. Chairman Hussain inquired whether Chief Evans' monthly report statistics could be used or placed in the Annual Report. LaNade will send spreadsheet information regarding the HRC caseload to the Publication Committee.

**B. Contract Renewal – Lobbyist Mike Pollick**

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Executive Director Chambers included in his monthly Executive Report, lobbyist Mike Pollak's compilation of work performed on behalf of the HRC during the past 2 years. Mr. Chambers stated that he is meeting with Department of Human Rights Executive Director Rocco J. Claps regarding the possibility of identifying mutual agency issues (such as the legislative liaison question) for possible collaboration.

V. New Business

Executive Session

Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2(c) (1)) the Commissioners voted to close a portion of the public meeting at 11:05 a.m in order to discuss an internal personnel matter. Motion made by Commissioner Muhammad, seconded by Commissioner Viverito. Motion carried 10-0. At 12:55 p.m., the open meeting resumed.

Approval of Calendar: January 2010-December 2010

The Commission voted to approve the calendar as submitted by staff. Motion made by Commissioner Muhammad, seconded by Commissioner Freeman. Motion carried 9-0<sup>1</sup>.

VI. Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Motion made by Commissioner Muhammad, with a second by Commissioner Ronen. Motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Harriet Parker  
General Counsel

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Leak excused himself from the meeting during the Executive Session. A quorum of the public body remained for the purpose of voting on Commission business.